



MEDIA AWARENESS ALERT

July 11, 2005

An Invitation to the Media:

Chesapeake Bay's Extremity is Plant Materials Program's Opportunity

Come and discover a Federal conservation program that has been working to provide environmental solutions by using plant technologies for over seven decades

Plants Are The Simple Solution! The National Plant Materials Center would like to provide members of the media a free tour of our facility to help create awareness among the general public as to **what they can do in their own backyards and in their day-to-day activities** to help ease stress on the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystems.

The nightmare scenario that hard-working Chesapeake Bay conservationists feared most is unfolding this summer as a green-slimy mess wipes out years of intensive restoration work in the Bay. This is because as temperatures rise **a 10-mile-wide algae bloom in the Potomac River is beginning to decimate fish and other marine life and with it possibly the economies of many small towns** and the individuals that depend on a healthy Bay to sustain a living.

How could this happen? What can be done to prevent this from occurring year-after-year? And what can the average person do to help save the Bay?

The National Plant Materials Center, a program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has been working on these questions for many years now. **Over the years, the Center has been responsible for plant-science technology that has increased the ability of agencies and organizations to restore devastated regions of the Bay which include portions of six states.** The Center partners with other conservation organizations including the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

One of the best kept ecological secrets of the USDA, the Center's 285 acres of trees, creeks, forests and farmland is a living Chesapeake Bay biosphere designed to filter, buffer and purify many nutrient and sediments before they enter the Bay.

The USDA NRCS National Plant Materials Center is located just outside of Washington D.C., in Beltsville, MD and is open Monday through Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Please call 301-504-8175 to schedule a tour.

Contact: Robert H. Westover, National Plant Materials Center, (301) 504-8175

About Us

The USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program consists of a network of Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) and Plant Materials Specialists located throughout the United States. For over 70 years, PMCs and Specialists have provide essential and effective plant solutions for critical habitats, environmental concerns, management practices, and key farm and ranch programs. There are 26 PMCs with service areas defined by ecological boundaries. <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>